

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 8 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T G Belben (Chair)

T Rana (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, R D Burrett, R A Lanzer, S Malik and A Pendlington

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, I T Irvine, G S Jhans, P K Lamb and P C Smith

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Ian Duke	Deputy Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Diana Maughan	Head of Strategic Housing
Gill Narramore	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Kate Wilson	Head of Community Services

Apologies for Absence:

Absent:

Councillor T McAleney

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R G Burgess	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Council representative on Crawley Open House
Councillor R G Burgess	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Crawley Festival committee member
Councillor R D Burrett	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Trustee for Crawley Open House

Councillor RG Burgess	Proposed Extension of Crawley Air Quality Management Area Boundary (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – Ward member for Three Bridges
Councillor R D Burrett	West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R D Burrett	West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Trustee for Crawley Open House
Councillor R A Lanzer	"One Town" - Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor R A Lanzer	Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor R A Lanzer	Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of the Crawley Economic Recovery Task Force & Town Deal Board
Councillor R D Burrett	Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 9)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 1 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair took the opportunity to amend the agenda order following receipt of a written public question and the supplementary item 'Crawley Town Investment Plan- Draft Heads of Terms'.

3. Public Question Time

The Commission had received a written question from Chris Cheshire from Gossops Green on behalf of Crawley Community Action trustees, beneficiaries & supporters. In accordance with the Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, the question was read out by a Democratic Services Officer. A copy of the response would be sent to the questioner.

The question referred to agenda item 4: Community Grants Allocations, specifically for CCA:

"When the CEO of an organisation which has deservedly retained its funding, acknowledged their debt to Crawley Community Action, he added:

'Should CCA not exist, it will lead to an increasing disconnect between organisations, impact the community, and leave organisations without a support mechanism.'

Does the Council really want to risk this?"

In response the Head of Community Services thanked Chris Cheshire for submitting the question on behalf of the CCA trustees.

It was stated that it was not an officer's position directly to comment upon a decision that may or may not be taken by members. However, the report that was due to be considered did provide the factual information and rationale that underpinned the detailed proposals in line with the approach made by Cabinet on 3 February 2021. This should assist members with their considerations and conclusions. It was acknowledged that the question would be asked at Cabinet on 10 March 2021 and it was further confirmed that officers would continue to work closely with funding partners to reduce any identified risks and work with the sector whilst the council transitions to a more modernised grants programme.

4. Community Grants Allocations

The Commission considered report [HCS/27](#) of the Head of Community Services. The report sought approval for the proposed Community Grants allocations for the transitional year 2021/22.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Community Services, the following comments were made:

- Confirmation provided on the allocations and criteria applied, focusing on key priorities.
- Acknowledgement that it was an unfortunate situation that the Council was having to reduce the funding, the Council was still twice as generous as any other similar type of Council in the country. The Council also provided significant property and rental support to a number of charities and third sector organisations, further to the grant funding. It was explained that the new funding proposal would be based on a commissioning approach, where the Council commissions organisations to provide clear indefinable outcomes for our community.
- Recognition that other alternative (external) funding opportunities may be available for organisations, such as Crowdfunding. There was a need to adapt to changes in funding and ways of working. However, the council would still be looking to assist in signposting.
- Acknowledgement that the majority of organisations would be receipt of the same funding level. 4 organisations had been recommended to have funding reduced or removed and the specific rationale for each of these was noted. It was remarked that the current grant awards programme was not based on any legally binding contracts, but it was referenced that organisations may apply a presumption of being funded as they were mid-way through a two year grant agreement (pre Covid and financial impact). The second year funding was provisional and there was a break-clause built in as organisations were required to provide an action plan prior to the second year. Monitoring reports were required for both year one and year two funding.
- In terms of unrestricted reserves, these were documented as surplus funds that an organisation can keep aside from their operational budget that did not have a restriction on how it was spent. In terms of CCA it was considered that the organisation could sustain itself and there was access to alternative funding.
- Recognition that it was important to ensure that the available funds were well managed.
- It was noted that the process was a new arrangement. The OSC should be satisfied over 12 months, that any subsequent action taken through Community Services had been sufficient and effective to support the voluntary sector

organisations that were currently supported by the CCA. As a result it was requested that a review report come back to the OSC on the changes.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

5. Proposed Extension of Crawley Air Quality Management Area Boundary

The Commission consider report [HCS/25](#) of the Head of Community Services. The report sought approval for the variation to the designated boundary area of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), together with the approval of the Order to vary the designated boundary area of the AQMA, following recent public consultation.

Following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, the Head of Community Services and Senior Environmental Health Officer, Members had the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the nitrogen dioxide levels as specified in the Air Quality Regulations 2000 were not being achieved. The extension of the AQMA allowed for a joined up approach across all the locations within the area.
- Confirmation that the nitrogen dioxide levels readings were reported annually in arrears. Although it was noted that traffic levels and air pollution reduced during the first lockdown in early 2020, DEFRA had confirmed 2020 to be an exceptional year and figures for 2-3 years should be analysed.
- It was noted that when the Three Bridges Improvement Scheme was reviewed, the current proposed design should be analysed to establish how it may affect the AQMA, particularly given the proposed change in road layout and removal of the right-hand turn from the station. Nitrogen dioxide levels and the 2019 data should feed into this review.
- Once the AQMA was declared, an air quality action plan would be produced to target sources of pollution and produce measures for mitigating issues within the areas. It was recognised that this was a recommendation within the recent Climate Change Scrutiny Panel final report.
- It was highlighted that education was key, along with the work taking place on active travel and sustainable transport. It would be important to promote modal shift and reduce emissions and improve air quality over time. Additionally, it was felt liaison with partners or businesses would be important to encourage alternative methods.
- Minor amendments within the document were noted but it was acknowledged that the draft order did not highlight those locations where the entire road was not covered by the AQMA, which could be confusing for the public.
- The actions in the previous AQMA have been in place since 2015, and measures had been established throughout the borough to address air quality. However it was noted that the road layout around Hazelwick was particularly difficult as a major road for Manor Royal and M23. Therefore improvements had not been as rapid but traffic management schemes were being analysed to improve traffic flow.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comments sheet.

6. **West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding**

The Commission considered report [SHAP/80](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

Building on partnership working across the county in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in recognition of the key role that housing plays in long-term population health and well-being, a key opportunity has presented to bring greater involvement from local health partners in addressing local needs.

The report sought endorsement of the development of a local health, housing and social care Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The West Sussex Health and Care Partnership endorsed a proposal for local NHS partners to work together with West Sussex Local Authorities to develop a local agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to mirror, at a local level, the national MOU "Improving Health and Care Through the Home: A National Memorandum of Understanding". The MOU forms a statement of ambition and intent for future working and collaboration between health, housing and social care in planning for and meeting need at a local level.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Strategic Housing Services, Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation that the MOU would assist in links between poor housing and poor health. It would provide an opportunity to challenge rough sleeping in a sustained way and encourage agencies to provide support.
- It was noted that it would provide a platform to engage with health services and providers. It would be actioned and monitored through the West Sussex Strategic Housing Board.
- Recognition that previous challenges have related to mental health services and providing effective support, together with the long terms sustainability of some NHS projects. It was hoped that working collaboratively there would be greater assistance, liaison and effective partnership working.
- The appreciation offered to the housing teams and support provided throughout the pandemic was noted and welcomed.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

7. **"One Town" - Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan**

The Commission considered report [PES/385](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought approval on the Council's draft Economic Development recovery plan and for agreement to go out for public consultation.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that there were amendments to slides 3 and 6 of Appendix A, along with proposed additional recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 10 March 2021.

- Confirmation that the report would offer a joined up approach and aimed for one holistic plan bringing in small organisations. The changes proposed would assist in the Local Plan consultation.
- It was noted that the plan highlighted the council's position in leading the drive for economic recovery, working with an array of partners.
- Some of the flagship interventions were already being brought forward or delivered, either through the Crawley Growth Programme or Crawley Town Investment Plan.
- Clarity sought and obtained on 'green infrastructure'; which revolved around strategic, environmentally-aware activity. It was observed that the plan would assist in offering green solutions to issues, including verges and improve air quality.
- General support for the report and plan as it was innovative, ambitious and yet the aims were realistic. It was felt there was a need to raise expectations, together with promotion for strengthening the local workforce skills and this featured in the Crawley Employment and Skills Programme. Skills for the Future aimed to improve overall social mobility amongst Crawley residents and retain people within the area.
- Recognition that there were different types of recovery; traditional in terms of aviation and Manor Royal, together with the novel recovery featuring digital enterprise and green infrastructure.
- Acknowledgement that the plan provided a long term strategic overview as timescales featured within the plan extended to 2050, which coincided with the climate change emissions target. However it was acknowledged that measures, deliverables and targets should be included between 2021 and 2050, which ultimately would move beyond this recovery.
- Clarification provided that the economy grew by £5.9b GVA (gross value added) per annum, which equated to the total value of economic output in Crawley in 2018.
- With reference to the 'Limited overall available employment land supply' it was noted that there were currently vacant sites within the borough due to the existing recession (particularly Manor Royal as a consequence of Covid19). However the Local Plan forecasts the overall need for employment land until 2037 to enable Crawley's long term economic recovery and growth. There was a significant land deficit within the town, which needed highlighting.
- It was felt that the final version of the plan should return to OSC following the consultation period.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report, including the documented changes to Appendix A, and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

8. Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms

The Commission considered report [PES/386](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought delegated approval for the Chief Executive to sign and return to government the Crawley Town Deal Heads of Terms document, subject to the prior approval of the Crawley Town Deal Board.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Councillors made the following comments:

- Recognition that Crawley was one of 101 towns across England to have been selected to benefit from the government's Towns Fund budget. Crawley was one

of 4 towns in south east England to have been selected and awarded £21.1m for the Crawley Town Investment Plan.

- It was hoped alternative funding sources could be obtained for the balance of the programme.
- General support for the report and funding. Appreciation was noted for the work undertaken by officers and partners in order to compile the submission.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

9. Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)

An update was provided from the most recent HASC meeting. Key items of discussion included:

- Mental health services and provision were to be incorporated into general practice.
- Work will take place to encourage young people to choose work in the health service as a positive career choice.
- A report followed on 'Improving mental health services for adults and older people in West Sussex'. Part of the work was to ensure that the voices of those in communities whose voice is often less well heard were included in any of the findings. The report featured a variety of aims.

1. Improve the quality of wards

It was found that several of the wards were outdated and there was a need to provide more modern accommodation. The preferred model initially was to establish single sex wards but it was concluded to continue with mixed sex wards at new, more modern, sites. Concern was expressed about the use of mixed sex wards but it was clarified that this would apply only to communal areas in the wards. There would be separate corridors, accessed by a key system, which would be single sex for the sleeping accommodation. Also more beds have been found for use in the service.

2. Transport to and from wards

Transport provision was much better in the north of the county. Those most affected as a result of having to travel further than previously would be given support in terms of travel allowances plus the provision for overnight stay facilities for families. It was noted that in some areas there were issues concerning parking and work would be undertaken in these areas to address the pressure on roads near to facilities.

3. Strengthen community care for people

There was a clear preference that people should be cared for wherever possible in their own homes. Steps were being taken to improve community services by providing greater access to crisis and urgent care and also home treatment service.

4. Establish centres of excellence for those living with dementia

Crisis centres (cafes) supporting mental health issues were present in some areas and these centres would provide an alternative to hospital admission. However, it was felt more were needed based on centres of population. Concern was also expressed about the need to improve support for carers.

10. Forthcoming Decision List - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The following reports have been confirmed from the Forthcoming Decision List:

28 June 2021

- Treasury Management Outturn 2020 – 2021
- Financial Outturn 2020-2021 (Quarter 4)

27 September 2021

- Budget Strategy 2022/23 – 2026/27

22 November 2021

- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2021-2022

31 January 2022

- 2022/2023 Budget and Council Tax
- Treasury Management Strategy 2022-2023

Final report - "One Town" - Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (tbc)

The Chair requested a report to either of the June's OSC meetings on staff sickness levels with Covid19 and the effects and impacts of working from home.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.25 pm

T G Belben (Chair)